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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4306

April 13, 2007

The Honorable James A. Baker, III
Baker Botts LLP
One Shell Plaza
910 Louisiana St
Houston, TX 77002-4995

Dear Secretary Baker:

It was good to see you Wednesday at the Fort Worth Star-Telegram editorial board. I'm sorry we weren't able to sit down together and have a conversation with the editors over what constitutes the best policy for Texas ratepayers when it comes to the future operations of TXU. After we parted, however, it occurred to me that a true and free public debate of the proposal and its merits would be valuable for everyone in our state who has a stake in the cost of electricity, not to mention economic growth and the advancement of personal opportunity. Therefore I would like to formally propose that you and I meet on neutral ground somewhere in Texas and debate the value to Texans of the TXU buyout.

As you know, the Texas Legislature is considering the sale and its implications right now. I know something about electricity issues after two decades on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, and everything I know tells me the proposed transaction is not good for the people who use electricity in Texas to heat and cool their homes or run their businesses.

I have three basic concerns. First, it only seems reasonable that the Public Utility Commission be able to review this deal and others like it in the future. Next, something seems very wrong when Texans already pay more than Oklahomans, Arkansans, Louisianans, and New Mexicans for their electricity. Finally, the idea that Texas can do well by isolating our power grid from the rest of America seems outdated and increasingly counterproductive. We're not doing well. We're only paying more. I know you see things differently, and yours is a perspective that is respected and valued not only in Texas, but around the world.

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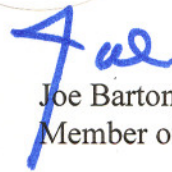
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I think a public airing of the differences – a real, side-by-side debate – will constitute a remarkably significant public service. I wouldn't think that we would have much trouble in finding a sponsor. Surely a Texas news media organization or university would be willing to host such an event. The Legislature is on the verge of making crucial decisions, however, so timing is important. Please let me know if you are willing to join me in laying out the facts and our different perspectives on something that matters deeply to every Texas family and business.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Barton", with a stylized flourish.

Joe Barton
Member of Congress